

Office of Public Information Performance Plan

Contributions to Montgomery County Results

The Office of Public Information -- through extensive media relations and direct communications efforts, most in collaboration with departments -- supports all of the Montgomery County results:

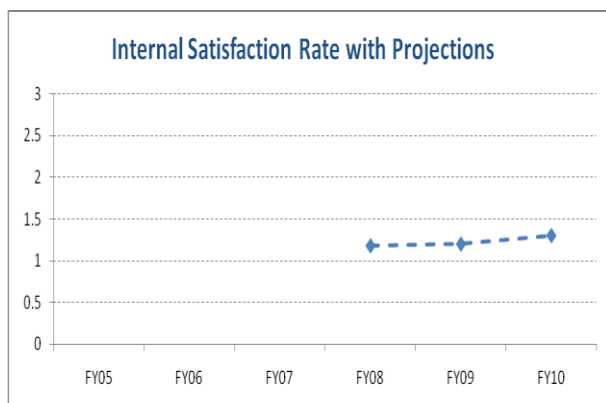
- A Responsive and Accountable Government
- Affordable Housing in an Inclusive Community
- An Effective and Efficient Transportation Network
- Children Prepared to Live and Learn
- Healthy and Sustainable Communities
- Safe Streets and Secure Neighborhoods
- A Strong and Vibrant Economy
- Vital Living for All of Our Residents

Contribution:

<i>What PIO Does</i>	<i>How Much?</i>
Promotes the County Executive's priorities and ensures that they are communicated clearly and accurately.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ FY09 Budget: \$ 523,488 (general fund) ▪ Number of Employees: 7.3 WYs
Reaches out and works with County departments and agencies to develop and implement strategies for communicating key messages and persuading the public that they are getting good value for their tax dollars.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ FY09 Budget: \$ 261,744 (general fund) ▪ Number of Employees: 1.5 WYs
Gets out in front of and manages challenging issues and problems by making sure that available information is accurate and complete and that the information is presented in context.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ FY09 Budget: \$ 130,872 (general fund) ▪ Number of Employees: 1.0 WY
Develops interesting and relevant television programs for the County cable channel to educate and inform cable subscribers about County services and issues.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ FY09 Budget: No general fund budget \$ 720,000 (cable fund) ▪ Number of Employees: 3.2 WYs
Adheres to the legal requirements of the Maryland Public Information Act	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ FY09 Budget: No budget ▪ Number of Employees: No work years
Overall The Office of Public Information – through extensive media relations and direct communications efforts, most in collaboration with departments – supports all of the Montgomery County results	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ FY 09 Budget: \$1,308,720 (general fund) \$ 720,000 (Cable fund) ▪ Number of employees: 9 (9.0 WYs) (general fund) 4 (4.0 WYs) (Cable fund)

Performance

Internal Customer Satisfaction Rate



What constitutes good performance for this measure?

- Overall satisfaction with PIO services should increase

Contributing Factors

- Knowledgeable and competent staff who respond in a timely manner.

Restricting Factors

- Shifting priorities and frequent deadlines

Utilization of Direct Resident Communication Systems (Web, YouTube, Video, Podcasts, Facebook) (Under Construction)

What constitutes good performance for this measure?

- Increasing County website "hits", County YouTube and podcasting downloads, and "friends" and feedback on the County Facebook site.

Contributing Factors

- New technology and a growing population of young adults who are comfortable using these systems for news and information.

Restricting Factors

- Older residents who do not understand how to use these systems.

Press Conference Attendance and Press Events (Under Construction)

Hypothetical Event Tracking Sheet

Date	Time	Location	Theme	Results Area	Attendance
1/14/2009	10:00 AM	255 Rockville Pike Rockville, MD 20850	Pedestrian Safety	Safe Streets Secure Neighborhoods	CE, Chief of Police Washington Post, Baltimore Sun
2/12/2009	6:00 PM	101 Monroe Rockville, MD 20850	Ride-On	Effective and Efficient Transportation	CE, DOT Director Washington Times, Gazette

What constitutes good performance for this measure?

- Press conference attendance should increase over time

Contributing Factors

- Newsworthy topic of regional interest.

Restricting Factors

- Competition with other breaking news.

Accuracy of Press Coverage on Key Issues (Under Construction)

What constitutes good performance for this measure?

- Press coverage accuracy should increase over time

Contributing Factors

- Knowledgeable, competent reporters who seek clarity when they don't understand an issue.

Restricting Factors

- Young and inexperienced reporters.
- Competing news that diverts attention and space from our key issues.

Story Behind Performance

Contributing Factors:

- Staff of highly skilled and committed public servants who work well together and are willing to do whatever it takes to get the job done;
- New technology and communication options for taking key messages directly to residents;
- Strong Metropolitan area press corps – representing both print and electronic media -- that covers Montgomery County well and conveys key messages to the public; and
- Highly educated and involved residents who are interested in their local government and are receptive to key messages and information about Executive priorities.

Restricting Factors:

- Limited resources, an extensive workload, an abundance of competing priorities, and frequent deadlines.
- Challenge of communicating clearly with a diverse population, where the message must be carefully crafted for different cultures and translated into various languages in order to ensure that the message is interpreted accurately.
- A growing group of individuals who do not access traditional news sources (television, radio and newspapers), making it more difficult to carry key messages efficiently to the public.

What We Propose to Do to Improve Performance

- Provide more direct communication with residents via publications and cable television shows, and explore new technology and ways to communicate.
- Provide more direct communication with residents via publications and cable television shows, as well as YouTube, podcasting, Facebook, and email subscriptions. We are continuing to explore new technology and ways to communicate, such as Twitter.
- Work more closely with departments and agencies on communication strategies in order to ensure that the County Executive's priorities are being promoted clearly and accurately. This is an adjustment from past efforts -- which focused more exclusively on the County Executive's role.
- Produce special cable television shows on issues of importance to the County Executive. The Fillmore development project, the Smart Growth Initiative and the Emergency Medical Services (EMS) Transport Fee are among the shows we have completed.

Innovations

- Through new technology such as YouTube, Facebook and Twitter, the Office of Public Information is reaching out with timely information about County programs, services and issues to more people. The office posts videos, photos and information on these communication and networking tools in an effort to reach out to more people and a wider range of individuals. In addition, the office is using YouSendIt software to package in-house video clips of press conferences with office press releases to network television stations for use in the same news cycle. This significantly expands the office's ability to reach out to populations that do not receive their news in traditional ways (via newspapers and television), and it increases the potential for television news coverage of County issues at a time when news stations are operating with limited resources.

Partnerships and Collaboration

- The Office of Public Information regularly collaborates with County departments and agencies in promoting programs and services, and in educating the public about critical issues through press events, cable television shows, web pages, newsletters and other communications. The Office also collaborates with outside entities such as public utilities, other jurisdictions and local and national businesses as needed to promote joint programs, policies and other issues, and to coordinate a united response to significant water main breaks, power outages, weather and other emergencies. The December 23, 2008 water main break on River Road in Bethesda is the most recent example of working collaboratively with outside agencies – in this case, the Washington Suburban Sanitary Commission – to address a problem and keep the public informed.

Appendix A

Budget

- Brought a contract video editor position in house for a 20 percent cost savings.
- Added a telephone message to the office's main phone line that directly connects callers to the staff who can answer their questions, which eliminates the need to transfer calls and eliminates the cost of a temporary clerical when the office's sole aide is absent from the office.

Appendix B

Implementation

FY09 Highlights

- July 17, 2008: Virtual Town Hall Meeting, "Online Chat"
- August 2008 – Implemented the Montgomery County Government presence at the Montgomery County Agricultural Fair.
- September (first week), 2008: Implemented a week-long pedestrian safety week, including a press conference each day on the County's different pedestrian safety programs and accomplishments
- September 17, 2008: Town Hall Meeting, Gaithersburg Middle School
- October 1, 2008: Call in Show, County Cable Montgomery
- October 3, 2008: Implemented the office's new telephone message system that takes callers directly to the staff who can help.
- October-November 2008: Month of explaining the County's affordable housing efforts through multiple press events.
- November 6, 2008: Virtual Town Hall Meeting, "Online Chat"
- November 20, 2008: Town Hall Meeting, Rocky Hill Middle School, Clarksburg
- January 7, 2009: State of the County
- February 11, 2009: Town Hall Meeting, White Oak
- March 16, 2009: Operating Budget Announcement

Appendix C

Data Development Agenda

- Track results from the annual internal administrative services survey that the CAO oversees to measure how responsive this office is in responding to departmental needs; in resolving communications issues/problems; and whether departments and agencies think this office responds in a timely way to requests for help.
- Track the number of hits on the Internet, YouTube and podcasting on the office's shows. This is an indicator of PIO performance because it demonstrates the level of effectiveness of communicating in this manner.
- Track the number of press conferences the office conducts annually, along with the average number of news organizations represented at each. This is an important indicator of PIO performance because it reflects the level of success in communicating with the public in this manner.